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## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC)

Funding Opportunity Title: 2016 Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Program - Advancing Predictive Capabilities to Evaluate Natural and Nature-based Features

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NOS-NCCOS-2016-2004616

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.478, Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research - Coastal Ocean Program

Dates: The deadline for receipt of applications by NOAA is 5 p.m., Eastern Time on January 8, 2016. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be accepted. Please note: You must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), which could take several days or weeks, to use Grants.gov, and validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. If electronic application is not feasible, paper applications will be accepted, but they must still arrive by the deadline. Electronic or paper copies received after the deadline will not be considered, and paper copy applications will be returned to the sender.

An informational webinar for potential applicants will be held in early November 2015. Applicants may find details about the final date and time for the webinar and how to access it, as well as the slides and question and answer session after the webinar occurs, at [http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea\\_level\\_rise](http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea_level_rise). Other Frequently Asked Questions may be put on this web site if applicable.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that NOAA/NOS/National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)/Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR) is soliciting proposals under the Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise (EESLR) Program to evaluate and quantify the ability of coastal natural and nature-based features to mitigate the effects of sea level rise (SLR) and inundation (storm surge, nuisance flooding, and/or wave run-up) effects on coastal ecosystems and communities through integrated field research and advancement of dynamic modeling tools. The overall goal of EESLR is to facilitate informed adaptation planning and coastal management decisions through a multidisciplinary research program that results in integrated models and tools of dynamic physical and biological processes capable of evaluating vulnerability and resilience under

multiple SLR, inundation, and coastal management scenarios. The geographic scope of this particular EESLR funding announcement is limited to coastal regions of (1) southern California, defined as San Louis Obispo County south to the US/Mexico border, and (2) the Gulf of Mexico.

Funding is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2016 Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that up to \$800,000 may be available in Fiscal Year 2016 for the first year of research. Approximately 2 to 4 proposals, for approximately 3-4 years in duration, are expected to be funded at a level not to exceed \$300,000 per year per proposal. In addition to this annual funding limit, any proposals submitted with total budgets (across all years) that are greater than \$1,200,000 will not be considered for funding.

Electronic Access: Background information about NOAA's Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise Program can be found at [http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea\\_level\\_rise](http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea_level_rise). Proposals should be submitted through Grants.gov, <http://www.grants.gov>.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

## I. Funding Opportunity Description

## A. Program Objective

The Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research (CSCOR), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS), develops and improves predictive capabilities for managing the Nation's use of its coastal resources through competitive research programs. NCCOS/CSCOR also supports efforts to translate the results of its research investments, and those of others, into accessible and useful information for coastal managers, planners, lawmakers, and the public to help balance the needs of economic growth with those of conserving the resources of our Nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

NCCOS/CSCOR provides a focal point for regional ecosystem-scale, multidisciplinary coastal ocean research within the NOAA National Ocean Service. Together with partners in NOAA and other organizations responsible for coastal resources, NCCOS/CSCOR advances the scientific understanding needed to protect coastal resources and ensure their viability for future generations. This increased understanding of the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes directly benefits the management of U.S. coastal and ocean resources, and helps NOAA, other Federal agencies, and state, tribal, and local governments achieve their stewardship responsibilities.

A key objective of NCCOS/CSCOR research is the production of user-driven predictive tools that will enable resource managers to assess alternative management strategies to restore degraded ecosystems and protect healthy ones. Research supported is outcome-oriented towards predictions, as well as increased scientific understanding that will provide managers and the public with sound scientific information for making decisions in support of societal objectives. Articulation of outcome-based management goals is required in proposals (see Section IV.B.) and recipients will be expected to report progress toward achieving outcome-based goals annually.

Rising sea level represents a significant threat to coastal communities and ecosystems through land loss, altered habitats, and increased vulnerability to coastal storms, nuisance flooding, and wave run-up. Trends in increasing coastal sea level have been well documented and are expected to continue increasing, if not accelerate, in the coming decades (Parris, et al. 2012, Watson, et al. 2015). While global consequences of SLR provide a sobering assessment for possible coastal condition in the future, significant variability in the rates of SLR and response of ecosystem types and response at the regional and local level

exists. This variability is confounded by significant variability in shoreline geomorphology, development and human response (e.g., beach nourishment). Damages and economic losses could be reduced if decision makers understand the potential impacts of SLR and use this information for planning (National Research Council 2012a).

In recognition of the need to facilitate increased coastal resiliency and improve adaptation and mitigation capabilities, numerous informational reports and tools have been produced to provide guidance to scientists, managers, and communities. The National Research Council (2012b) outlined projected sea level change along the west coast and described corresponding responses of natural shorelines. NOAA (2012) outlined a series of steps for local managers and emphasizes the need to consider differing scenarios and planning at the local level. Similarly, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and NOAA (2011) provided guidance on using model results depicting potential impacts of SLR on coastal wetlands and highlighted the need for a multi-model approach, as well as key parameters and dynamics that should be considered.

Providing the scientific foundation for coastal decision making, particularly related to SLR and coastal inundation, is a high priority need identified by NOAA. To address this need, NCCOS's Ecological Effects of Sea Level Rise (EESLR) Program has sought to develop integrated predictive models and other tools required to accurately predict coastal ecosystem effects and services in the face of SLR. Application of these tools by coastal resource managers allow for improved planning, management, mitigation, and restoration in response to sea level rise and coastal inundation.

The Program has funded projects in North Carolina (<http://www.coastalscience.noaa.gov/projects/detail?key=186>) and the northern Gulf of Mexico (<http://www.coastalscience.noaa.gov/projects/detail?key=162>) to develop tools for coastal managers to mitigate regional ecological impacts of SLR. Starting in 2005, the North Carolina SLR Project engaged North Carolina state and local managers to disseminate findings and adopt their recommendations in the development of mapping and modeling tools to deliver to the coastal management community. The Gulf SLR Project began in 2010 and is working with the local management community to develop maps that delineate new tidal boundaries as a result of SLR; and estimates of sediment loadings from overland runoff to estuarine systems, erosion rates, projections of changes in critical habitats (e.g., salinity distributions, marsh, beach, shellfish, submerged aquatic vegetation, land cover), and water resource impacts. Providing the scientific foundation for coastal decision making, particularly related to SLR and coastal inundation, is a high priority need identified by NOAA and NOS.

Projects from this program directly address all three priorities outlined by NOS; Coastal Resiliency, Coastal Intelligence, and Place-based Conservation. In 2015, EESLR initiated a suite of projects in support of the NOAA Sentinel Site Program and focused on advancing capacity and capabilities required to improve long-term regional and local ecosystem predictions of SLR and coastal inundation effects.

The use of Natural and Nature-based Features (NNBF) has gained traction as a means to enhance coastal resilience and mitigate the potential impacts of extreme events, SLR and inundation to coastal communities (Sutton-Grier 2015; USACE 2015). NNBF refer to a spectrum of features from natural coastal ecosystems (e.g. marshes and dunes) to nature-based features that utilize a combination of natural and human engineered features to create a 'hybrid' shoreline (Sutton-Grier 2015, SAGE 2015). Specifically, NCCOS/CSCOR defines NNBF as:

- Natural features refers to existing ecosystems including forests, wetlands, floodplains, dune systems, seagrasses, barrier islands and reefs that provide multiple benefits to communities, such as storm protection through wave attenuation or flood storage capacity and enhanced water services and security.
- Nature-based features (or green/gray infrastructure) are engineered systems where natural features are combined with hard or structural engineering approaches to create a hybrid system such as in a living shoreline.

Unlike hardened structures (e.g. bulkheads and groins), NNBF are often living features that can adapt to changing conditions and may become more stable over time, while providing multiple ecological and socio-economic benefits to coastal communities and ecosystems (Sutton-Grier et al. 2015, CGIES 2015, NACCS 2015). In recent years, there has been considerable effort among multiple levels of government, non-governmental organizations, scientists, and private interests to advance the use of NNBF. While the value of these features is intrinsically understood, quantification of their both current and long-term capabilities and performance has been limited. Considerable research gaps remain in our current understanding of how and where natural infrastructure can be implemented, the benefits and performance of NNBF and the value of features in enhancing coastal resilience.

Examples of identified research gaps include:

- NNBF ability to enhance coastal resilience (or performance) during extreme and chronic events and how these benefits vary with coastal landscape variables such as topography, bathymetry;
- Quantitative understanding of the biophysical, socioeconomic and behavioral factors that influence NNBF production functions (e.g., influence of sedimentation and water flows, performance and protective benefits of natural systems, combined hybrid approaches, and

sources of non-linearity in ecosystem function);

- Ecosystem service valuation to facilitate consistent, standardized monetary and non-monetary valuation of NNBF including benefits, co-benefits and trade-offs of NNBF versus other coastal protection approaches;
- Decision support tools that integrate the current state of the science to inform decision-making processes;
- Development of best practices on construction or restoration of NNBF to enhance coastal resilience.

## B. Program Priorities

NCCOS/CSCOR is soliciting proposals to evaluate and quantify the ability of NNBF approaches to mitigate the effects of SLR and inundation (storm surge, nuisance flooding, and/or wave run-up) on coastal ecosystems and communities through integrated field research and advancement of predictive modeling applications. These efforts should focus on advancing predictive models towards the dynamic integration and characterization of multi-disciplinary physical and biologic processes with that of SLR and coastal inundation effects.

Specifically, proposals should address two or more of the following EESLR research priorities:

- Advancement of existing SLR and inundation predictive capabilities through the dynamic coupling of hydrodynamic and biological/physical modeling platforms and the integration of field-based studies of relevant coastal processes;
- Application of advanced dynamic modeling capabilities to conduct scenario evaluations of coastal community and ecosystem vulnerability to sea level rise and inundation under varying scenarios of NNBF use;
- Quantification of services provided by NNBF approaches at enhancing community and ecosystem resiliency to chronic sea level rise and nuisance flooding and acute inundation associated with storm surge and/or wave run-up.

To the extent possible, proposals should build on and leverage existing research (e.g., prior projects through state resources, EESLR, the NOAA Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications program, U.S. Geological Survey, Integrated Ocean Observing System, and/or Sea Grant). Leveraging of data and capabilities associated with National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR), National Wildlife Refuge, and other protected areas are encouraged. Proposals should focus on the advancement of existing modeling platforms and/or community modeling systems used by NOAA and/or relevant partners. Advancements could include incorporation of dynamic model integration or downscaling, enhanced parameterization, uncertainty estimates, and/or module development required to assess and evaluate NNBF approaches. Proposed new or novel modeling approaches would require

significant justification and explicit end-user demand to be considered for funding.

Complementing a strong scientific foundation, proposals should focus on the production of actionable information for decision making through explicit linkages between the proposed research and the anticipated benefits to coastal communities. Within this context, proposals should apply a highly integrated and collaborative management-science approach and outline a continuous engagement process with relevant end-users with clearly defined management linkages and drivers. This could include, but is not limited to, pre-project meetings, annual workshops, training on application of tools, and inclusion of selected managers on coordination calls where local knowledge and natural resource management issues can help guide study objectives and methods. Successful proposals will work with relevant regional partners and NOAA NCCOS to form a Management Transition Advisory Group (MTAG) that will provide substantive guidance to the project team and help to ensure application of project results. Inclusive engagement with an MTAG will be required of all projects. Designation of a dedicated principle investigator focused on coordinating engagement of the MTAG and conceptualizing project applications is strongly recommended. In addition, use of NERR expertise and capabilities is encouraged to maximize end-user engagement and collaboration.

Examples of possible results and outcomes of EESLR applied and/or enhanced capabilities could include:

1. Advanced predictive models and tools that are designed in collaboration with end-users to enable coastal managers/planners the ability to evaluate the effects of NNBF on the long-term vulnerability of communities and ecosystems vulnerable to SLR and inundation;
2. Enhanced capabilities for predictions of changes in locally valued ecosystem services associated with anticipated impacts from SLR and coastal inundation in conjunction with NNBF approaches;
3. Improved scientific and management knowledge of the effectiveness, services and long-term sustainability of NNBF under varying scenarios of application, inundation, and/or SLR;
4. Models and tools that will assist with the design, construction and adaptive management of restoration and/or NNBF projects and incorporate chronic SLR and inundation stressors;
5. Guidance and strategies for regional transition and application of integrated NNBF features and/or metrics for objective evaluation of performance.

The geographic scope of this EESLR funding announcement is limited to coastal regions of (1) southern California, defined as San Louis Obispo County south to the US/Mexico border, and (2) the Gulf of Mexico. Both regions have considerable ongoing research and engagement activities associated with sea level rise and coastal resiliency. Pending funding availability, proposals from each region will be ranked independently and proposals

addressing both regions are not recommended. Proposals should clearly demonstrate the value added of the proposed work, partnerships, and, where possible, leverage related regional efforts (e.g., NOAA Coastal Resiliency Grants, restoration activities). In addition to NOAA, potential partners include additional federal agencies, state and local governments, Sea Grant, and relevant non-governmental organizations.

Region-specific partners could include, but are not limited to:

- Gulf of Mexico:
  - o The Northern Gulf of Mexico Sentinel Site Cooperative;
  - o Gulf of Mexico Alliance;
  - o Landscape Conservation Cooperatives;
  - o National Estuarine Research Reserves;
  - o Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System.
- Southern California:
  - o California State Coastal Conservancy;
  - o Southern California Coastal Water Research Project;
  - o Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve;
  - o California Landscape Conservation Cooperative;
  - o South California Wetlands Recovery Project;
  - o Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System.

An ideal proposal would propose working with NCCOS/CSCOR and other NOAA offices to provide guidance and/or a framework for the transfer of results, capabilities and tools to facilitate possible future application in additional regions.

All NOAA environmental data developed through this announcement shall adhere to the guidelines documented in NOAA Administrative Order 212-15 ([http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_212/212-15.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_212/212-15.html)). Also, all proposals must include a data management plan which considers how to provide data as soon as feasible to the public (see Data Reporting Requirements in Section VI. C.).

#### References:

NACCS Report. 2015. North Atlantic Comprehensive Study. US Army Corps of Engineers. <http://www.nad.usace.army.mil/compstudy>

National Research Council. 2012(a). Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative. Washington, DC. The National Academies Press.

National Research Council. 2012(b). Sea Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington: Past, Present, and Future. Washington, DC. The National Academies Press.

Parris, A., P. Bromirski, V. Burkett, D. Cayan, M. Culver, J. Hall, R. Horton, K. Knuuti, R. Moss, J. Obeysekera, A. Sallenger, and J. Weiss. 2012. Global Sea Level Rise Scenarios for the US National Climate Assessment. NOAA Tech Memo OAR CPO-1. 37 pp.

NOAA. 2012. 2012. Incorporating Sea Level Change Scenarios at the Local Level  
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/publications/slscenarios>

SAGE. 2012. Natural and Structural Measures for Shoreline Stabilization.  
[http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/\\_/pdf/living-shoreline-brochure.pdf](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/_/pdf/living-shoreline-brochure.pdf)

Sutton-Grier, A., K. Wowk, and H. Bamford. 2015. Future of our coasts: The potential for natural and hybrid infrastructure to enhance the resilience of our coastal communities, economies and ecosystems. *Environmental Science and Policy* 51: 137-148.

TNC and NOAA. 2011. Marshes on the Move:  
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/publications/marshesonthemove>

Watson, C.S. N.J. White, J.A. Church, M.A. King, R.J. Burgette, and B. Legresy. 2015. Unabated global mean sea-level rise over the satellite altimeter era. *Nature Climate Change* 5(6): 565-568.

## C. Program Authority

Coastal Ocean Program, 16 U.S.C. § 1456c

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

Funding is contingent upon availability of Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that up to \$800,000 may be available in Fiscal Year 2016 for the first year of research. Approximately 2 to 4 proposals, of approximately 3-4 years in duration are expected to be funded at a level not to exceed \$300,000 per year per proposal. In addition to this annual funding limit, any proposals submitted with total budgets (across all years) that are greater than \$1,200,000 or more than five years will not be considered for funding.

Applicants are hereby given notice that funds have not yet been appropriated for this program. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If one incurs any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, one would do so solely at one's own risk of not receiving an award or these costs not being included under the award.

Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

#### B. Project/Award Period

Full applications may cover a project/award period up to 4 years, but shorter-term project proposals are also encouraged. When an application for a project period of more than one year is approved, funding will usually only be provided for the first year of the project. These multi-year awards may be funded incrementally on an annual basis, but once awarded those awards will not compete for funding in subsequent years. However, NOAA has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award. Continuation of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the sole discretion of NOAA and will be contingent on satisfactory performance, continued relevance to the mission and priorities of NOAA, and the availability of funds. During the implementation phase of research projects funded under this announcement, regardless of the funding mechanism used, NCCOS/CSCOR Program Managers will analyze financial statements and progress reports for each continuing award, and will have dialogue with the Principal Investigators and Authorized Representatives of the recipient institutions to discuss research progress and expected time lines for the remaining award period. If NOAA experiences budget reductions in future fiscal years, the amount of funding provided in any given fiscal year will be determined by the remaining tasks to be completed, the overall pace of the research and the length of time remaining on the award and/or across the board reductions based on the overall funds available, and program priorities.

Regardless of the budget for any given fiscal year, Program Managers will consider the length of time remaining for each project, the amount of funds available, the tasks to be completed in the upcoming fiscal year, the pace of research, and any delayed progress relative to that originally proposed, before determining the funding amount in any given fiscal year.

#### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Research applications selected for funding from non-Federal researchers will be funded through a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is appropriate when substantial Federal government involvement is anticipated. This means that the recipient can expect substantial agency collaboration, participation, or intervention in project performance. "Substantial involvement" will be coordinated and communicated by NCCOS/CSCOR program managers, and can include collaboration and participation by NOAA researchers, as well as NCCOS/CSCOR program manager involvement in Principal Investigator meetings, setting up management advisory groups, development of management transition plans, and communication of project results.

In an effort to maximize the use of limited resources, applications from non-Federal, non-NOAA Federal and NOAA Federal applicants will be evaluated in the same competition. If the applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), they are allowed to submit applications that reference the CI by attaching a cover letter to the application stating their desire to have the application associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the cooperative institute, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The application will use the F&A rate associated with main CI agreement. If the application is selected for funding, NOAA will notify the university that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. However, the award will include two Special Award Conditions (SACs): (1) the existing University/NOAA Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance report(s) for the competitive project must follow the timetable of the funding program and be submitted directly to the funding program. Report(s) will be copied to the CI's administrator when due, to be attached to the main cooperative agreement progress report as an appendix. This will allow the CI to coordinate all the projects submitted through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

Research applications selected for funding from an eligible NOAA Federal applicant will be funded through an intra-agency transfer and research applications selected for funding from non-NOAA Federal applicants will be funded through an interagency transfer, provided legal authority exists for the Federal applicant to receive funds from another agency. PLEASE NOTE: Before non-NOAA Federal applicants may be funded, they must demonstrate that they have legal authority to receive funds from another Federal agency. Support may be solely through NCCOS/CSCOR or partnered with other Federal offices and agencies.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, other non-profits, state, local, Indian Tribal Governments, commercial organizations, and U.S. Territories. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. § 1456c and Federal agency authorities, Federal agencies may submit applications, although the funding instrument if selected would be through interagency transfer rather than financial assistance. DOC/NOAA supports cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications to the NCCOS/CSCOR programs. In addition, DOC/NOAA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. DOC/NOAA encourages applications involving any of the above institutions to apply.

Please note that:

- (1) NCCOS/CSCOR will not normally fund any Federal Full Time (FTE) salaries, but will fund travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual personnel costs associated with the proposed work. If an applicant thinks that they are eligible for an exception, they should provide the Program Manager with appropriate documentation and obtain approval prior to submitting an application.
- (2) Researchers must be employees of an eligible entity listed above; and applications must be submitted through that entity. Non-Federal researchers should comply with their institutional requirements for application submission.
- (3) Non-NOAA Federal applicants will be required to submit certifications or documentation showing that they have specific legal authority to accept funds for this type of research.
- (4) Foreign organizations and foreign public entities are eligible for sub-awards only, and should apply through an eligible U.S. entity.
- (5) Non-Federal researchers affiliated with NOAA-University Cooperative/Joint Institutes will be funded through cooperative agreements.
- (6) NOAA/NOS/NCCOS researchers are ineligible to apply.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None

#### C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Each full proposal must substantially comply with the sixteen elements listed under Required Elements, (1)-(16), or it will be returned to sender without further consideration. A checklist with the required and requested application elements can be found in Section VIII.

### IV. Application and Submission Information

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application materials are available at <http://www.grants.gov> as part of the electronic application package which includes the federal forms. For a preview and for paper applications, these forms can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortBy=1>. A paper copy of the application materials are available through:

Laura Golden

1305 East West Hwy

NOAA SSMC 4 Station 8219

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Laurie.golden@noaa.gov

301-713-3020

## B. Content and Form of Application

### 1. Applications

The provisions for application preparation provided here are mandatory. Applications received after the published deadline (refer to DATES) or applications that deviate from the prescribed format will be returned to the sender without further consideration. Information regarding this announcement and additional background information are available on the NCCOS/CSCOR home page. An example application can be found at: <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/applicants/forms> and FAQs are also available.

### 2. Required Elements

For clarity in the submission of applications, the following definitions are provided for applicant use:

**Funding and/or Budget Period** - The period of time when Federal funding is available for obligation by the recipient. The funding period must be specified in multi-year awards. This term may also be used to mean budget period. A budget period is typically 12 months.

**Award and/or Project Period** - The period established in the award document during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends. The term award period is also referred to as project period.

**Collaborating Proposals** - If more than one institution is collaborating in a project - if funded - the lead institution will be the only institution to directly receive funds from NOAA. All collaborating institutions must be budgeted as subawards/contracts if they are receiving funds.

Each application must substantially comply with the following sixteen elements or it will be returned to sender without further consideration. The Summary, Title page, Abstract, Project Description, References, Biographical Sketch, Budget Narrative and Collaborators List must

be single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins.

The sixteen elements are as follows:

(1) Standard Form 424. At the time of application submission, all applicants requesting direct funding must submit the Standard Form, SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance," to indicate the total amount of funding proposed for their institution for the whole project period. This form is to be the cover page for the original application and is the first required form in the grants.gov application package.

(2) Summary title page. One page maximum. The Summary title page identifies the project's title, starting with the acronym: EESLR 2016 and the Principal Investigator's (PI) name and affiliation, complete address, phone and E-mail information. The requested funding amounts for each fiscal year with and without ship funding should be included on the Summary title page.

(3) One-page abstract/project summary. The summary (abstract) should appear on a separate single page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost (with and without ship funds), and budget period. It should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize these key points in their own words. Project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program related websites. The project summary shall include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed.

(4) Project Description. The description of the proposed project must include narratives of the Proposed Research and of the Application to Management, and not be more than 20 pages in length, encompassing elements (a) through (f).

The Proposed Research Narrative should be thorough and explicitly indicate its relevance to the program goals and scientific priorities by:

- (a) Identifying the topic that is being addressed by the proposal;
- (b) Describing the proposed scientific objectives and research activities in relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and in relation to previous and current work by the proposing principal investigator(s).
- (c) Discussing how the proposed project lends value to the program goals;
- (d) Identifying the function of each PI. The Lead PI (s) will be responsible for communicating with the Federal Program Manager on all pertinent verbal or written information.
- (e) Providing a detailed data management plan which describes how metadata and data

collected as part of the project will be disseminated to the broader community, and plans for longer term archiving of these data. Principal Investigators that propose to collaborate with data centers or networks are advised to obtain letters of commitment that affirm the collaboration. Where possible, all PIs are strongly encouraged to use existing data centers and data portals to archive and disseminate their data. Costs associated with use of data centers, or data archiving, should be included in the application budget. See the section on the NOAA Data Reporting requirements below (Section VI. C.).

(f) The Applications to Management Narrative should establish the connection to relevant resource management needs by explicitly identifying the end user group(s) including evidence of the linkage between the scientific questions and management needs. If applicable, the format and role of management and technical advisory committees should be included in this section. If applicable, proposals should specifically identify direct participation of manager(s) as co-Principal Investigators.

This narrative should provide the management justification for the research through:

(a) Articulating the coordination with one or more management entities;

(b) Discussing the expected significance of the project to management priorities and needs. Specific management targets, with proposed outputs and outcomes, should describe how this project will improve management capabilities. Outputs are defined as products (e.g. publications, models) or activities that lead to outcomes (changes in management knowledge or action). Definitions and examples of outputs and outcomes can be accessed at <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/recipients/outcomes>. The timeline for achieving outcomes should be included in the Milestone Chart (below).

(c) Describing specific activities, such as workshops or development of outreach materials, that will enhance information transfer from project scientists to relevant management entities, other end-users, or the public.

(5) References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Project Description.

(6) Milestone chart. Provide time lines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.

(7) Biographical sketch. All principal and co-investigators must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:

(a) A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;

(b) A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications.

(8) Current and pending support. Describe all current and pending federal financial/funding support for all principal and co-investigators. Continuing grants must also be included. A current and pending support form is available on the CSCOR web site for your use: <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/applicants/forms>. You must respond to the requirement whether or not you have any current and/or pending support, e.g. by indicating “not applicable”.

(9) A list of all applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. You should respond to this requirement element whether or not permits are required.

(10) Accomplishments from Prior Federal Support on SLR and/or NNBF related projects. If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received federal funding in the past five years for research on SLR and/or NNBF, information on the award(s) is required. Each PI and co-PI who has received more than one award (excluding amendments) should report on the award most closely related to the proposal. This section should not exceed two pages per award.

The following information must be provided:

- a) the award number, amount and period of support;
  - b) the title of the project;
  - c) a summary of the results of the completed work;
  - d) publications resulting from the award;
  - e) a brief description of outputs and outcomes; and
  - f) as appropriate, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.
- Reviewers will be asked to comment on the quality of the prior work described in this section of the proposal. You should respond to the requirement whether or not you have accomplishments from prior federal support on SLR and/or NNBF related projects; e.g. by indicating “no prior federal support on SLR or NNBF research”.

(11) Budget narrative/justification. In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of costs, all applications must include a detailed budget narrative and a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year. Personnel costs should be broken out by named PI and number of months and percentage of time requested per year per PI. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year in the milestones chart (see Required Elements (6) Milestone chart).

Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be

identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. The contribution of any personnel to the project goals should be explained. Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Equipment costs should describe the equipment to be purchased, and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals. For additional information concerning each of the required categories and appropriate level of disclosure please see <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/applicants/requirements>.

Any ship time needs must be clearly identified in the proposed budget. The applicant is responsible for requesting ship time through appropriate channels and for meeting all requirements to ensure the availability of requested ship time. Copies of relevant ship time request forms should be included with the proposal.

If any NOAA personnel will be present during ship operations, vessel safety clearances should be obtained through the NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) in advance of the cruise. Required information and procedures are detailed in a Charter Vessel Acquisition and Safety NOAA Administrative Order which can be accessed via the OMAO website at <http://www.oma.noaa.gov/charterreq.html>.

A separate budget justification is required for each subaward. Signed approval from each known subaward/subcontract institution is also required. The lead institution is responsible for sending funds to their subaward/subcontractor's institutions. For acquisition contracts, award recipients are subject to policies described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317-.326.

(12) CD 511. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution.

(13) SF 424B. Assurances - Non-Construction Programs. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov SF 424B document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on document from the submitting institutions.

(14) Standard Form 424A. At time of application submission, all applicants are required to submit a SF-424A Budget Form which identifies the budget for each fiscal year of the proposal. Place each fiscal year in separate columns in Section B of page 1 on the SF424A by filling in the fiscal years 1 to 5 in Section A Budget Summary - Grant Program Function or Activity column. (Note that this revised 424A Section B format is a NOAA requirement that is not reflected in the Instructions for the SF 424A). The budget figures must correspond with the descriptions contained in the proposal. Each subaward/subcontract should be listed

as a separate item in the budget justification and each subaward should provide a SF424A.

Provide separate budgets for each subaward regardless of the dollar value and indicate the basis for the cost estimates for subawards and contracts. Describe products/services to be obtained and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project. List all subaward and contractor costs under line item 6.f. contractual on the SF-424A. Signed approval from the institution of each known subaward and contractor should be provided. Indirect cost may not be applied to ship costs.

(15) Provide one list that includes all collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (principal and co-principal investigators, post-docs, and subawardees), complete with corresponding institutions. Submit only one, combined and alphabetized list per application in an excel spreadsheet using First Name, Last Name, Institution for the column headings. Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications in the resumes. Collaborators also include those persons with which the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations. Advisees and Advisors do not have a time limit. Advisees are persons with whom the individual investigator has had an association as thesis advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

(16) Key Contacts form. At the time of application submission, all applicants should submit the Key Contacts form. This form can be found on the NCCOS/CSCOR website: [http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/docs/key\\_contacts\\_form.pdf](http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/funding/docs/key_contacts_form.pdf). This form identifies the official applicant contacts.

Application format and assembly. Applications submitted via the Grants.gov "APPLY" function should follow the format guidelines below:

Attachments should be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF, text document, excel or word format to maintain format integrity. Please submit the required documents as described below. Follow the instructions found on the Grants.gov web site for application submission into the Grants.gov system. All required forms that do not have specific placeholders in the Mandatory Document box must be submitted in the Optional Form box as Other Attachments and labeled with the document name: i.e. budget narrative, project description, milestone chart etc. For a collaborative application: The documents for each additional institution should be combined into one file. The lead institution should label the file with the name of the institution and upload the file into the Optional Form box as Other

Attachments. Repeat this procedure for each collaborating institution.

Save your completed application package with two different names before submission to avoid having to re-create the package should you experience submission problems. If you experience submission problems that may result in your application being late, send an e-mail to support@grants.gov and call the Grants.gov help desk. Their phone number is posted on the Grants.gov web site. The Program Manager associated with the Request For Applications will use programmatic discretion in accepting applications due to documented electronic submission problems. Please note: If more than one submission of an application is performed, the last application submitted before the due date and time will be the official version.

In addition to the sixteen required elements, it is requested that the indirect cost rate agreement be provided upon application submission. It is allowable for applicants to suggest merit reviewers on a page after the Summary Title Page and to include letters from unfunded collaborators. These forms can be uploaded in to the Optional Form box under Other Attachments in Grants.gov.

Applications containing known subawards must provide - SF424A, Budget Justification, Current and Pending Support, and Key Contacts. Applications containing known contractors must provide - Current and Pending Support, Key Contacts, and cost or price justification for the contracts.. Signed approval from the institution of each known subaward and contractor should be provided.

We also request submission of the indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable.

\*Permits, accomplishments, Biographical sketches and the collaborators list should be supplied to the lead institution in order for them to be combined within the lead application information.

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all necessary Federal, state and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. Applicants are expected to design their proposals so that they minimize the potential adverse impact on the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits should be received by the Program Manager prior to release of funding. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient environmental documentation to allow program staff to determine whether the proposal is categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, or whether an Environmental Assessment is necessary in conformance with requirements of the NEPA. For those applications needing an Environmental Assessment, affected applicants will be informed

after the peer review stage; and will be requested to assist in the preparation of a draft of the assessment (prior to award). Failure to apply for and/or obtain Federal, state, and local permits, approvals, letters of agreement, or failure to provide environmental analysis where necessary (e.g. NEPA environmental assessment) may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding.

C. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

D. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of applications at NOAA is 5 p.m., Eastern Time on January 8, 2016. Note that late-arriving hard copy applications will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document with tracking number and receipt that:

- 1) The application was provided to a delivery service with delivery to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, 1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4, Mail Station 8219 8th Floor, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-328;
- 2) Delivery was guaranteed by 5pm, Eastern Time on the specified closing date;  
AND,
- 3) The application was received by NOAA by 5 p.m., Eastern Time no later than 2 business days following the closing date. In this situation, the applicant is responsible for notifying the Program Manager of its submission. If an applicant is not notified of receipt of its application by NOAA, the applicant is responsible for following up to assure its application was received, and demonstrating documentation of timely submission.

Investigators submitting applications electronically are advised to submit well in advance of the deadline.

Important: All applicants, both electronic and paper, should be aware that adequate time must be factored into applicant schedules for delivery of the application. Electronic applicants are advised that volume on Grants.gov is currently extremely heavy, and if Grants.gov is unable to accept applications electronically in a timely fashion, applicants are encouraged to exercise their option to submit applications in paper format. Paper applicants should allow adequate time to ensure a paper application will be received on time, taking into account that guaranteed overnight carriers are not always able to fulfill their guarantees

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It has been determined that this notice is

not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a) (2), an opportunity for public notice and comment is not required for this notice relating to grants, benefits and contracts. Because this notice is exempt from the notice and comment provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required, and none has been prepared. It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

#### F. Funding Restrictions

**Indirect Costs:** If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06. The NOAA contact for indirect or facilities and administrative costs is: Lamar Revis, Grants Officer NOAA Grants Management Division 1325 East West Highway 9th Floor Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 [lamar.revis@noaa.gov](mailto:lamar.revis@noaa.gov).

NCCOS/CSCOR will not fund start up or operational costs for private business ventures and neither fees nor profits will be considered as allowable costs. Ship costs may not be included in indirect cost calculations unless ship is calculated within the IDC rate of the institution. NCCOS/CSCOR will not pay for ship overhead expenses otherwise. If indirect costs are applied, an approved indirect cost agreement will be required before an application can be recommended for funding.

#### G. Other Submission Requirements

Applications should include evidence of linkages between the scientific questions and management needs. Applications previously submitted to NCCOS/CSCOR FFOs and not recommended for funding must be revised and reviewer or panel concerns addressed before resubmission. Resubmitted applications that have not been revised will be returned without review.

Applications submitted in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to be submitted through the Grants.gov web site. The full funding announcement for this program is available via the Grants.gov web site: <http://www.grants.gov>. This announcement will also be available by contacting the program official identified below. You will be able to access, download and submit electronic grant applications for NOAA Programs in this announcement at <http://www.grants.gov>. The closing dates will be the same as for the paper submissions noted in this announcement. NOAA strongly recommends that you do not wait

until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

Applicants must register with Grants.gov before any application materials can be submitted. To use Grants.gov, an applicant must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). Refer to Section VI.B. below of this FFO. Allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration; it may take longer if complications arise. Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form. An organization's one time registration process may take up to three weeks to complete, and periodic renewals are required, so allow sufficient time to ensure applications are submitted before the closing date.

Please refer to important information in Submission Dates and Times (Section IV.C.) to help ensure your application is received on time.

Applicants must contact the Program Manager for non-electronic submission instructions.

Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of full applications will not be accepted.

Electronic submissions should be sent via grants.gov.

Paper submissions should be sent to:  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1305 East West Highway  
SSMC 4 Station 8219  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals: This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities. This will include the plans for data management and access. (35 percent)

2. Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and

objectives. (30 percent)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work as evidenced by past research accomplishments, previous cooperative work, timely communication, and the sharing of findings, data, and other research products. (15 percent)

4. Project costs: The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. (15 percent)

5. Outreach and education: NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. (5 percent)

#### B. Review and Selection Process

Once an application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive applications may be eliminated from further review. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can easily be rectified or cured. All applications that pass this initial review will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review.

Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers will be several individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular applications. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual applications within his or her area of expertise, and score them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1). The reviewer applies a rating of 1 – 5 to each criterion and the total score is calculated from the weights. For example: If the criterion is given 40% weight and the reviewer give this criterion 4 out of 5 then the criterion is scored as a 32. (Rating = 4 out of 5, Percentage = 40; Total =  $4/5 \times 40 = 32$ ). Each criterion is scored in the same way. All scores are added together and the final score falls into the below ratings:  
Rating: 5 Excellent = 100 - 90; 4 Very Good = 89 - 80; 3 Good = 79 - 70; 2 Fair = 69 - 60 and 1 Poor = 59 and below. Applications receiving a scores of 70 or higher will be sent forward to a panel review.

This peer panel will comprise several individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so that the panel, as a whole, covers a range of scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals and will use the mail review in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. All proposals rated 70 and above will be evaluated and scored individually by the panelists. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and scores provided above and used by the mail reviewers. The individual peer panelists' scores for each application will be presented to the Program Manager to create a rank order. Only the panel scores shall be used to rank each proposal. No consensus advice will be given by the independent peer mail review or the review panel.

The Program Manager will neither vote or score applications as part of the independent peer review panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the applications other than to ask questions. Those applications receiving an average panel score of "Fair" or "Poor" will not be given further consideration, and applicants will be notified of non-selection.

For the applications scored by the reviewers as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good", the Program Manager will (a) create a ranking of the applications for both regions to be recommended for funding based on panel scores (b) determine the total duration of funding for each application; and (c) determine the amount of funds available for each application subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Awards may not necessarily be made in rank order. In addition, applications rated by the panel as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good" that are not funded in the current fiscal period, may be considered for funding in another fiscal period without having to repeat the competitive review process.

Recommendations for funding are forwarded from the Program Manager to the appropriate Branch Chief and then the CSCOR Director for development of the final recommendation to the Selecting Official, the Director of NCCOS or designee, for the final funding recommendation decision. Recommendations will be made in rank order by region through the peer-review process unless justification is provided to select out of rank order based on the selection factors listed below in C.

NOAA reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with the applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs. Additionally, NOAA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. NOAA also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the responsibility of the applicant. NOAA may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application, and may request that

applicants combine projects. The Selecting Official will make recommendations to the NOAA Grants Management Division, and the final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decisions of the NOAA Grants Officer are final.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant. Declined applications will be held in NCCOS/CSCOR for the required 3 years in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying whether the corporation has Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

#### C. Selection Factors

Proposals may be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding.
2. Balance/distribution of funds
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research areas
  - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies.
4. Program priorities and policy factors. Refer to section I.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance.
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the grants officer.

Awards may also be modified for selected projects depending on budget availability or according to the selection factors listed above.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications will begin in January, 2016. Applicants should use a start date of September 1, 2016.

### VI. Award Administration Information

#### A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. The award cover page, i.e., CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

#### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements.  
The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf>.

#### Uniform Administrative Guidance.

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, adopted by the Department of Commerce through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.

#### Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions unique to a project, including conditions that may limit the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable.

#### Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative\\_orders/chapter\\_216/216-6.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/ames/administrative_orders/chapter_216/216-6.html), and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, [http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa\\_documents/RedDont/G-CEQ-GuidanceRegulations.pdf](http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/nepapub/nepa_documents/RedDont/G-CEQ-GuidanceRegulations.pdf). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants to be recommended for funding will be required to answer relevant questions from the "Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for NOAA Federal Financial Assistance Applicants" (OMB Control No. 0648-0538). The Program Manager will determine which questions are relevant to each specific proposal. Answers must be provided before the application can be submitted for final funding approval.

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

#### DUNS and SAM

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will

be required to use the System for Award Management (SAM) <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/> and the Central Contractor Registration and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2013), [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03add6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200\\_1300&rgn=div8](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1ccffb4c1d4de03add6a041113460f9&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1300&rgn=div8)

#### Proprietary or Privileged Information

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information should be clearly marked in the proposal or included as a separate statement accompanying the proposal and should be appropriately labeled with a legend such as, “The following is [proprietary or confidential] information that [name of proposing organization] requests not be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation.” While NOAA will make every effort to prevent unauthorized access to such material, it is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

#### Release of Grantee Proposal Information

A proposal that results in an award will be available to the public on request, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically exempt. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act, referenced further in the next paragraph. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, NOAA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized by law. Portions of proposals resulting in grants that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the grantee owns a right, title, or interest (including a nonexclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. NOAA will notify the grantee of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the grantee may advise NOAA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial or proprietary information contained in the proposal.

#### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the

Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

#### Scientific Integrity

CSCOR adheres to the principles of scientific integrity. This policy can be found at; <http://nrc.noaa.gov/scientificintegrity.html>.

#### C. Reporting

All performance (i.e. technical progress) reports shall be submitted electronically through the Grants Online system unless the recipient does not have internet access. In that case, performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Manager. All financial reports shall be submitted in the same manner. All ship time use must be reported by the PI or Chief Scientist on each cruise within the performance reports.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000.

#### Data Reporting Requirement

Environmental data and information, collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements.

1. Unless otherwise noted in this federal funding announcement, a Data/Information Sharing Plan of no more than two pages shall be required as part of the Project Narrative. A typical plan may include the types of environmental data and information to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, data, and security; and prior experience in

publishing such data. The Data/Information Sharing Plan will be reviewed as part of the NOAA Standard Evaluation Criteria, Item 1 -- Importance and/or Relevance and Applicability of Proposed Project to the Mission Goals.

2. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) will be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data.

3. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

In conformance with 2 CFR 200.315, any data collected in projects supported by NCCOS/CSCOR should be delivered to a National Data Center (NDC) such as the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) in a format to be determined by the institution, the NDC, and the Program Manager. Information on NOAA NDC's can be found at <http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov>. It is the responsibility of the institution for the delivery of these data; the DOC will not provide additional support for delivery beyond the award. Additionally, all biological cultures established, molecular probes developed, genetic sequences identified, mathematical models constructed, or other resulting information products established through support provided by NCCOS/CSCOR are encouraged to be made available to the general research community at no or modest handling charge (to be determined by the institution, Program Manager, and DOC).

## VII. Agency Contacts

Technical Information: David Kidwell, Program Manager for CSCOR, 301-713-3020, Electronic mail: [David.Kidwell@noaa.gov](mailto:David.Kidwell@noaa.gov).

Business Management Information: Laura Golden, NCCOS/CSCOR Grants Administrator, 301-713-3020, Electronic mail: [Laurie.Golden@noaa.gov](mailto:Laurie.Golden@noaa.gov).

## VIII. Other Information

An informational webinar for potential applicants will be held in early November 2015. Applicants may find details about the final date and time for the webinar and how to access it, as well as the slides and question and answer session after the webinar occurs, at [http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea\\_level\\_rise](http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/climate/sea_level_rise). Other Frequently Asked Questions may be put on this web site if applicable.

Collection of information requirements

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

This notification involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Check List for Required and Requested Documents:

SF-424

Title Page

Abstract

Project Description

References

Milestone Chart

SF-424A (One for the lead institution and each subaward)

Budget Narrative and Justification (One for the lead institution and each subaward, and price or cost information supporting each contract).

Bio Sketch

Current and Pending Support

Permits (if none, say so)

Alphabetized Collaborator List (ONE Excel spreadsheet for all)

Waiver, if applicable

Signed Approval from subaward/subcontractor institutes

Ship Request form, if applicable

SF-424B

CD-511

Key Contact form